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CREATIVE ARTS AS HEALING

Resting

Martina Steiger, ThD

My eyes move up and gaze at the bare brown branches behind my windows, moving towards me and away from me, to the right and to the left, defining with each movement their range of motion. The mottled grey sky shifts, approaches and retracts as the branches shake and twist and bend. A big sigh emanates from deep within my chest, pushing itself up and out through my open mouth; 'ahhhh,' a descending scale fills the room, then evaporates into the inaudible realm.

At first a little pause, a stillness and silence, then the familiar slow breath steadily creates movement in and with my body, even in the stillest place. My left buttock wriggles and twists itself just enough back and to the left that it connects with the soft pillow it touches. As my upper back leans back, my right buttock adjusts and reaches towards that pillow. The top right and left corners of the pillow nestle under my armpits as my torso sinks into it, enveloped by the foam. My arms rest on the pillow; with each breath my shoulder blades glide down ever so slightly, almost but not quite simultaneously, as if reaching for my back pockets.

With my eyes closed, my back rhythmically and softly pushes into the light fluffy pillow as I breathe in, imprints itself for even just a fleeting second, and moves away from it as I breathe out, creating just the tiniest of gaps between my cotton T-shirt covered skin and the rough-textured cover of the foam pillow. I catch the slight arrest in time and movement between breathing in and out, the stillpoint where I am centered between my right and left buttocks.

The soles of my feet gently rest on the cool smooth hardwood floor that pushes against each one of the widespread toes. From deep inside the big toe, a strong pulse moves up the right shin and pushes against the kneecap, then travels through the thigh and anchors in my belly where it expands and finally melds into the mellow thumping of the heart. The slightly irregular, yet rhythmic beat spreads its ripples in my chest like softly lapping waves that caress my ribcage.

A guttural purr seeps into my left eardrum from where it descends and amplifies the reverberation of the beat inside my cheekbones and my chest. Two white-booted paws lean against the outside top edge of my diaphragm, one presses down and inward towards the centre of my chest as the other paw releases its pressure. Tiny drops of moisture drip from the shiny top of the nose, adding a dark dot to the paler lines and shapes that crisscross the T-shirt.

My left arm rises out of the shoulder blade, lifts up just a few inches, releasing my hand from the pillow. My fingers stretch out, extend and descend again until they land on the fuzzy soft head of the cat whose purr instantaneously magnifies as soon as my fingers touch his furry neck. My fingers, thumb included, move in harmony with the kneading motion of the cat's paws, scratching inward from right behind the ears down into the neck; then they release as if to take a breath along with the cat whose purring and kneading are completely in sync with the rising and falling of my chest. When my chest falls, my fingers lift ever so slightly, stretch in almost straight lines before they descend again.

The cat shakes its head and the flapping ears punctuate the kneading. White cat hair floats through the air, illuminated by the single ray of light that has entered my room. Dozens of cat hairs are dancing together, swirling, drifting, rising, dropping in any and all directions. Two settle on my right nostril, tickling a sneeze that reactivates the dancing of the hairs. My lips part with a faint smack, the corners of my mouth lift up and move out, inciting my cheekbones to join in the movement. The cat turns his head and his green eyes sink deep into mine. The kneading and purring cease as he buries his cold wet nose right into the warmth of my neck, resting his whiskers against my chin.

Martina C Steiger, ThD, MSc in Narrative Medicine, specializes as life and story coach, author and transformative educator. As a health advocate, she focuses on the power of story to change the way care is given and received. She provides personalized coaching and offers consultations for institutions and organizations in education and health services. Both nationally and internationally, she facilitates listening, writing and storytelling workshops as well as innovative processes of self-care, stress prevention, transitions, and creative learning.

www.martinasteiger.com



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 P.O. Box 76, Bellmawr, NJ 08099
 Phone (609) 714-1885 Fax (519) 265-0746
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